

My first flag

By Roland W. Peterson

Roonie cannot sleep. Constantly he wakes up and looks at the clock. Roonie is six years old. The day before he went with his dad to buy a new flag. They bought the largest flag that they could find. Each time he wakes up, he thinks... how he is going to raise the flag. Again he looks at the clock and again he thinks... the sun does not want to rise yet. Next to his bed, on a chair, he has the folded flag. The flag is almost as big as his bedsheet. Today is Flag Day and he wants to raise the flag. Then there it is... aha, he hears a rooster crow. He jumps out of bed and opens the window curtain to look outside.

The day has begun... it is getting lighter. Roonie takes the flag from the chair. With the flag in his hand he runs to his parents' bedroom.

Roonie jumps on the bed and starts waking up his father. Papa,... Papa, wake up, we have to raise the flag. Papa tells Roonie that it was too early, that the sun did not rise yet. Roonie jumps off the bed and pulls open the window curtain. Look... Papa the sun is shining. Roonie is getting impatient now. He begins pulling his father's arm for him to get up. Let's go Papa... come, we have to start now.

Mama, who also wakes up, opens only one eye, turns over in bed and continues to pretend that she is sleeping.

Roonie and Papa look through the window, they see that it is drizzling. What must



they do if it starts to rain? Roonie is very disappointed. Suddenly they see the sun's rays penetrating through the glass window. It is going to stop raining.

With the flag in his hand Roonie runs out of the house and to the flagpole in the yard. It is still drizzling. In the sun's rays, the drops look like little diamonds falling from the sky. They splash on his little face.

Roonie reaches the flagpole and starts loosening the knot in the rope. Papa has to run and grab the rope before Roonie pulls it, otherwise the end of the rope can be pulled through the pulley at the end of the flagpole.

Papa teaches Roonie how to make the knot in the rope.

The flag should not touch the ground. The first knot must be made in the corner of the flag where the star is. Roonie tightens the knot and his father checks if it is tied well.

Now the other end of the rope is tied to the other corner of the flag. Papa checks this too.

Now Roonie starts raising the flag. Slowly... slowly the flag goes up. The wind is blowing very hard. The flag is so big that it almost raises Roonie from the ground. The rope is wet and slips through his hands. With all his strength Roonie tightly holds onto the rope. He is so small he is afraid that the huge flag will lift him up. He wants to ask his father to help him, but is determined

to raise the flag alone. He struggles with the large flag, the strong wind and the wet rope.

It has stopped drizzling. The sun is bright and its rays shine on the flag. The star glitters in the rays. The wind continues to blow hard, the two yellow stripes stretch open. It looks like a bird that stands up and spreads its wings, ready for flight.

Roonie continues pulling the rope and the flag is now at the top of the pole. The wind blows hard. The flag is flying firmly. It flies in the wind and makes the sound like a thousand angels clapping their hands.

Roonie ties the rope to the pole and his father checks if it is tied well. Little Roonie does not realize yet but his struggle to raise the flag is already his first battle won for his country. Roonie runs to the front of the house to get a better look at the flag. The flag flies majestically. Roonie's small heart is beating fast... he is proud. He jumps up and down and yells very hard: "PAPA... I HAVE RAISED MY FIRST FLAG."

On Flag Day, all day, time and time again Roonie runs outside to see if the flag is still flying. That day, once again, Papa tells Roonie the story of our flag and assures Roonie... that for always... always..., until the end of time, OUR FLAG will fly on Aruba.